



ACC CENT

**Bold Challenges.
Bold Leadership.**

Changing the face of Avila. p.2



Avila University's Alumni Magazine
SPRING 2022

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Dear Avila Alumni & Friends,

AS I REFLECT ON THESE PAST SIXTEEN YEARS, I'm reminded of the countless moments when Avila's mission came alive as we changed the lives of thousands of students from every corner of the country and beyond. Along the way, I've been profoundly moved by the people of Avila and the charisma of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet (CSJ). The CSJ collective spirit of generosity and community has made me a better person and Avila a stronger institution. I came to Avila in 2006 with a view of infinite possibilities. I was eager to join and lead the people of Avila as we, together, went about forging a promising future and overcoming any obstacle in our path.

My long agenda began with the campus itself. Guided by a vision and a fresh plan, we went about upgrading, renovating, and repurposing our campus facilities. Those early campus enhancements were necessary to accommodate our growing academic programs and student services. The result was not only an improved physical environment; but a place where all students felt welcome and could see their path to graduation and become inspired to be lifelong learners who contribute to the global community.

Working in concert with you, our loyal alumni, donors and friends, we strengthened Avila's mission with a renewed focus and contemporary interpretation.

This work was, most of all, in service of a rapidly-changing world where our students' needs were also changing, and they needed our support to achieve a degree of higher education. We focused on ensuring students understood the six 'I words'; Inspired, Insightful, Integrated, Inclusive, Innovative and Influential.

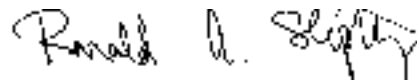
We celebrated our 100-year legacy in 2016 and leaned in to our history, the CSJ teachings, that we are called to serve the dear neighbor without distinction, and foster a community of inclusion, understanding and peace.

Looking at the University in 2022 and the educational landscape we continue to navigate, I see the pace of change accelerating even faster. However swift and sweeping the change, Avila will continue serving as a hub for lifelong learning where we place our students' needs at the center of every decision we make. In this way, we will be a lifelong enterprise that will tap the imagination and transform how we see and seize the future.

And you will remain an integral part of Avila's journey for the next 100 years. Your spirit of generosity and belief in the mission will propel and enable Avila and all of us to do and be more.

The beauty of Avila I saw on my first day shines even more brightly in my eyes as my last day as President nears. I am deeply grateful for these sixteen years and for each of you, and for the kindness, care and belief you have shown me every day. I'm forever grateful for this opportunity to have served you.

Avila Proud,



Ronald A. Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA
President



I am deeply grateful for these sixteen years and for each of you, and for the kindness, care and belief you have shown me every day."



Bold challenges. Bold

Changing the face of Avila.

After more than 16 years serving as Avila University's 14th President, Ronald Slepitza, Ph.D., CSJA, will retire in June. During his tenure, Slepitza made sweeping impacts across our community. From the monumental transformation of the campus to the robust relationships he built and boldly navigating Avila through a global pandemic, "I wanted to act boldly with the Avila community to do great things."



BOLD CAMPUS CHANGES

Slepitza began his appointment on July 24, 2006, and 60-days later broke ground on the Jeanne Collins Thompson residence hall (completed Fall 2007). "Ron had an immediate understanding of Avila's potential and a vision to take it there. He brought new energy and a buzz to campus," said Bob Hunter, Board of Trustee member from 2003-2019. "It was the beginning of exciting times to come."

With Slepitza's leadership, Avila next took on its largest capital campaign. The \$43 million Centennial Campaign focused on further transforming the campus for the future.

- **Turning the Hooley-Bundschu Library into a Learning Commons**
- **Creating a Science and Health Complex and expanding the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program**
- **Growing campus ministry that included archives, a reflection space, and garden, and a statue of St. Teresa**
- **Establishing a Performing Arts Center on campus**

leadership.

BOLD STUDENT ADVOCATE

While the campus was changing, Slepitza's commitment to Avila's students and pride in Avila remained unchanged and at the center of everything he did as president. "With Ron, the important messages are about the students, the faculty, and staff, not his position," said his wife, Suzanne Slepitza.

"Ron is a special leader and a great friend. I met Ron my second semester on campus. We have built a true friendship over the last 15 years," said Larry Hayes '11, '12, director of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Public and Indian Housing. "Ron is interested in Avila students making their communities a better place to live globally; and that is a rare attribute for a leader to care about everyone doing the best they can for society."

Slepitza's belief in Avila's students is engraved in stone at the entrance to the university, his famous "I" words – Inspired, Insightful, Integrated, Inclusive, Innovative, and Influential. "We want to create a graduate who can go out in the world and be inclusive and understand how to build effective teams in a very diverse world," said Slepitza. "Innovative graduates that they can look for new ideas, put together knowledge in new ways and find ways of creating change that is necessary in today's world."

- Adding a fourth residence hall
- Expanding the dining hall
- Renovating the athletics complex and adding an all-weather turf field

"Dr. Slepitza's tenure has produced dramatic changes to the face of Avila University with consistent upgrades and strategic additions to campus facilities. Under his guidance, there has been more remodeling, renovation, and new construction than had been accomplished in the prior 30 years," said Joe Fahey, current Board of Trustees member and chair of the facilities committee.



President Slepitza at the grand opening of the Goppert Performing Arts Center in 2021.

BOLD SUPPORTER OF THE CSJ

With Avila's roots built on the foundation of the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Slepitz was an embodiment of their vision and values. Slepitz became an Associate of the Sisters of St. Joseph (CSJA) in 2007. He lives and breathes Avila's mission and influences the next generation to become the best version of themselves so that they may inspire others to do the same.

Under Slepitz's leadership, Avila continued to build on the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Slepitz ensured the university was preparing students for a future filled with technological advances and influence in a world torn with societal, political, and cultural tension.

The creation of the Buchanan Initiative for Peace and Nonviolence (BIPN) on campus embodies the CSJ vision. Jean '76 and Bill Buchanan gifted Avila with \$1 million to influence future generations, focusing on peace and nonviolence. "Ron has been committed to the BIPN from the very start with unwavering support to bring students, academics, and activists together to raise a generation with the nonviolent tools it needs to make peaceful social change possible. He helped take what was only a vague idea and make it concrete," said Jean Buchanan.

BOLD CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Toward the end of his tenure, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted every individual and every aspect of campus. It was also another opportunity for Slepitz to place the values of the CSJ out front. "Please know that you are not in this alone. In the spirit and inspiration of our founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, take care of your neighbor and yourself." It's no surprise Slepitz tackled Avila's pandemic challenges with the same insights, caring, and energy he brought to campus in 2006. His commitment to the charism of the CSJ, serving the Dear Neighbor, and improving campus quality of life will be his legacy for generations to come.

"You see, as much as you are a part of Avila's past, you are also a part of our future," said Slepitz. 🏠

-
1. Dave '76 and Geri Frantze, Mark '19 (Hon.) and Amy Thompson, Anne '75 and Steve Dunn, Sue and Joe '16 (Hon.) Fahey toast with Ron at the annual President's Circle Reception.
 2. Ron with Sr. Olive Louise Dallavis, former president.
 3. Ron interacting with students at the home basketball game.
 4. Ron pitching-in and helping students during an annual Fall semester Move-in Day.
 5. Students with Ron enjoying lunch during an annual Fall semester Avila Kick-off Day.
 6. Bill '18 (Hon.) and Jean '76, '18 receiving their Fr. Medaille recognition from Ron.
 7. Ron presenting a diploma to a graduate during a commencement ceremony.





3.



4.



6.



7.

FOR 16 YEARS, PRESIDENT SLEPITZA has believed in making Avila a place where students' needs come first. In his farewell semester, **please consider a gift of \$16 for his 16 years of service.** All these gifts will be directed to student scholarships and be matched until June 30.



“The Sisters of St. Joseph have always been extremely generous with Avila.”

— President, Ronald Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA

2019-2023 Province Leadership Team

(front l-r) Sisters Fran Maher, Margaret Schulz and Amy Hereford, and Councilors (back) Sisters Maria Jeanne Tipton and Jeanne Janssen



Avila University receives \$1 Million Gift from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

AVILA UNIVERSITY’S FOUNDERS, THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET (CSJ), HAVE PLEDGED \$1,000,000 TO THE UNIVERSITY. “The Sisters of St. Joseph have always been extremely generous with Avila,” said Avila President, Ronald Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA. “This unexpected gift will not only make an immediate impact to the University but help us live our mission of preparing lifelong learners who contribute to the global community in a meaningful way.”

In a letter to Slepitz, the CSJ St. Louis Province Board of Directors cite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on all of the CSJ sponsored educational institutions.

“All of our institutions needed to alter their normal ways of operating and had to enlist faculty and staff in ways they never thought imaginable,” said Sr. Jeanne Janssen, Province Board of Directors member and current

Avila staff member. “Yet you kept your missions and the CSJ charism before you and considered them in your decisions as each institution made many sacrifices.”

Along with Avila University, the Province made donations to Fontbonne University, St. Joseph’s Academy, St. Teresa’s Academy, and St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf. “As each institution is evaluating and continuing to adapt to serve the dear neighbor with an excellent education, we know that financial resources continue to be challenged,” said Sr. Janssen.

“This generous gift is belief in the hard work everyone at Avila is doing to help our students succeed. For more than 100 years, Avila’s mission has provided opportunities for students to earn an education regardless of financial means and with the support of the CSJs, that will continue for many years,” said Slepitz. “This level of support is a blessing.” 🙏

James Burkee, Ph.D. Named 15th President of Avila University



THE AVILA UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES UNANIMOUSLY SELECTED DR. JAMES (JIM) BURKEE, vice president for strategic initiatives at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, as Avila's 15th president. Burkee succeeds Avila President Ronald Slepitz, Ph.D., CSJA, who is retiring.

"As a first-generation college student himself, Jim understands the impact of liberal arts higher education," said Sr. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D., Board of Trustee member, and vice-chair of the president search committee. "I see his commitment to underserved groups and service to the community. These commitments are important to us at Avila. I also see the charisma of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Jim's leadership style. Avila University is blessed to have him."

"I am honored and energized to lead Avila University at this pivotal time in its 106-year history," Burkee said. "The best presidents generate trust and respect, working well with others, considering their needs, and focusing on justice and fairness while driving toward the University's

"I also see the charisma of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Jim's leadership style. Avila University is blessed to have him."

— Sr. Marie Joan Harris, Ph.D.

strategic goals. They think big and work hard to rally the community around audacious goals."

Burkee will join Avila as the University's Chief Operating Officer before transitioning to President. He brings a breadth and depth of experience to Avila's highest post. With 25 years in higher education, Burkee has held most academic leadership positions and senior-level administrative roles responsible for strategic planning, business and academic partnership development, and enrollment.

The first in his working-class Wisconsin family to earn a college degree, Burkee earned a B.A. in history and a B.A. in business/marketing from Concordia University, his Teacher Colloquy from Concordia College, New York, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from Northwestern University. 🎓

Scan to read more about
Avila's 15th president



Empowering the Laity to Continue the Mission of Catholic Education

THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CARONDELET OF THE ST. LOUIS PROVINCE ARE PROUD OF THE FIVE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THEY FOUNDED and want to see their impact on Catholic education continue for generations to come. To achieve this goal, they are taking an innovative step, empowering the laity to continue the educational ministry that the sisters have established.

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis Province is transferring sponsorship of the sisters' educational institutions to the newly established St. Joseph Educational Ministries (SJEM).

SJEM is a model of Catholic sponsorship called a ministerial public juridic person, a status granted to SJEM by the Vatican that enables lay people to take on the sponsorship role traditionally held only by the religious. Although "ministerial public juridic person" sounds like an individual, it is a canonical term for a group of persons who together further the mission of the church.

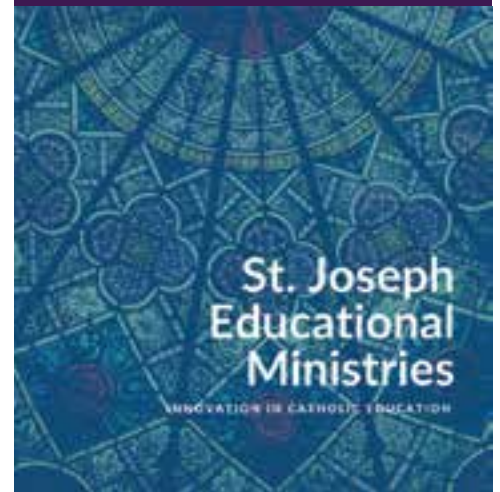
"Religious institutes have seen success with this model for decades, but SJEM is one of the first of its kind for education in the United States," says Sr. Amy Hereford, member of the St. Louis Province Leadership Team.

SJEM will serve as the bridge between the schools and the church as it assumes the responsibility for ensuring that Catholic identity and the Sisters of St. Joseph's mission of "serving the dear neighbor" are retained at the schools in perpetuity.

The sisters will remain active and present at the schools, serving as board members, employees, volunteers, and prayer partners. They also will serve alongside the laity as members of SJEM and lead the educational formation program for the members. Day-to-day operations at the schools are not affected by this new arrangement.

The members of SJEM, appointed by the sisters' St. Louis Province Leadership, are chosen based on criteria that demonstrate a commitment to the Catholic education ministry in the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet's tradition. Members are charged with applying Catholic theological tradition, the Sisters of St. Joseph's heritage, and Catholic social teaching.

"This is the expression of Vatican II's call to recognize the laity as an integral part of the life of the church and a means of fostering our common Christian vocation in living out the Gospel," says Hereford. 🏠



SJEM member schools:

1. Avila University, Kansas City, Missouri (est. 1916)
2. Fontbonne University, St. Louis, Missouri (est. 1923)
3. St. Joseph's Academy, St. Louis, Missouri (est. 1840)
4. St. Joseph Institute for the Deaf, St. Louis, Missouri, and Indianapolis, Indiana (est. 1837)
5. St. Teresa's Academy, Kansas City, Missouri (est. 1866)

Avila SJEM members:

- Dave Armstrong, CSJA
Avila Director of University Mission and Ministry
- David Kerr '76, Board of Trustees
- Sr. Marie Joan Harris, Provost Emerita and Board of Trustees

Saluting Retiring Faculty and Staff



Dr. Charlene Gould speaks during the Grand Opening of Goppert Theatre.

CHARLENE GOULD, Ph.D., DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES – 27 YEARS

Charlene Gould retires after nearly three decades on campus. During that time, she was the producing artistic director for more than 100 productions, the director of 21 university productions, the force behind the Goppert Performing Arts Center, and a champion of Avila's liberal arts education. "I would not be who I am today without her," said Rob Scoles '88. "Tough but always fair wrapped with kindness and love is Char. My mentor and friend for life."

"Dr. Gould modeled professionalism, mentoring both their strengths and weaknesses. Expectations were high, and most students thrived on the challenge," said Carol Coburn, Ph.D. professor emerita religious studies.

"I will remember her passion and drive and the many times that laughter and a sense of humor provided the best balm to fatigue, stress, and the absurdities that are a part of the academic experience – in theatre and life." 🎭



MARTHA BLACKMAN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR IN NURSING – 24 YEARS

Avila's nursing students are better for the 49 years of clinical experience Martha Blackman shared in the classroom. "She is an exceptional educator," said Lonna Boen, RN, MSN, and assistant professor in Avila's nursing program. "She shares her compassion for nursing with students and stresses the important principles of nursing. She is a great role model for students at the bedside and someone I would go to for advice related to education and life."

An avid cyclist, Blackman has completed many long-distance, self-supported bicycle tours over the past several years, her longest being about 1,800 miles. "I will miss seeing her ride onto campus on her bike," said Boen. 🐾

DON BLINZLER, FACILITIES – 23 YEARS

"I liked fixing things, and there always seemed to be something to fix," said Don Blinzler, Avila's resident MacGyver. Every small university needs a Blinzler on staff to dive into a mechanical challenge and fix it using whatever is on hand. "I remember it was flooding in O'Reilly in November. We had to shut off a valve outside the building. There were three of us standing around, including President Tom Gordon, and I knew none of them would go underground," said Blinzler. "I had to jump into two feet of water and feel around to turn the valve off."

A great supporter of Avila's mission, Blinzler and his wife Marcia established the Danielle Adam Scholarship, named after their two children, and given to a theatre student each year. The Blinzler's are also regulars at Avila's annual Steer Dinner and Auction. Blinzler is recognizable as the gentleman wearing the hand-painted tie-die tuxedo or a horse-head costume. "I like helping people, and it was fun." 🐾



Marcia and Don at the 2016 Steer Dinner & Auction

PAT KOPP, MAED, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR – 36 YEARS

“Pat is a strong pillar of the Avila faculty and has always been willing to engage with discussions on improving the computer science curriculum and how to support our students,” said Darrin Smith, Ph.D., dean of the College of Science and Health. Over his 36 years, Kopp has educated many generations of computer scientists. “The most joy I get is when a student, who is struggling with an assignment, suddenly sees what needs to be done,” said Kopp. “The look on their face shows how excited they are, and it really makes me happy to see that.”

After advising hundreds of students, serving as the academic systems manager for the university, chair of computer science, chair of the curriculum committee, and earning his Master’s in Education from Avila, Kopp leaves with a lifetime of memories. However, his most cherished memories are of the late C. Larry Garrison Sullivan, Ph.D. “He was an inspiration to me, and he helped when I had a challenging student and encouraged me to strive for more,” said Kopp. “He was more than a boss; he was a colleague and a friend.” 🗨️



Dr. Reagor with Bryan Tunison '11, '17

JANET REAGOR, Ph.D., RN, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND CHAIR OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING – 20 YEARS

Inspired to become a nurse by her older sister, “I never considered any other career,” said Reagor. Falling in love with cardiac ICU care, Reagor also enjoyed teaching patients, their families, and her fellow nurses. After earning her master’s degree and moving to Kansas City, Reagor began teaching at Avila and completed her Ph.D. in 2010.

“I think Janet has taught about every course in the program,” said Angel Yanez, DPN, RN, CHSE, and interim chair of the School of Nursing. “Her knowledge of accreditation standards and detail has been valuable in assuring that Avila maintains its longstanding tradition of excellence.” Reagor’s role in forging relationships on campus and in the nursing community is another reason Avila’s nursing program is so well regarded. “The relationships always leave the biggest impressions,” said Yanez. “Janet touched the lives of so many students, many of whom she remains in contact with after graduation.” 🗨️

AVILA UNIVERSITY • 46TH ANNUAL STEER DINNER & AUCTION

Building Tomorrow Together



On Saturday February 5th, Avila University alumni, friends, faculty and students gathered together at the Kansas City Marriott Muehlebach Tower for the **46TH ANNUAL STEER DINNER & AUCTION**. Kate Thompson Brown, CSJA served as Honorary Chair, alongside Event Chairs Dr. Alie Scholes and Ellen Martin. Shawna Pena-Downing '12 led the night as emcee. Guests

raised their paddles in support of Catholic education and to support the more than 98% of Avila students who rely on scholarships to fulfill their dreams of a college education. Together more than \$1.3 million was raised for student scholarships, all thanks to the generosity of Avila's amazing community.



1. Nicole Nicoll, Karen Baum '94, Sr. Ruth Stuckel and Bill Baum
2. Talia '16 and Robert '13, '15 Hayes
3. Christine Ojile '82, Theresa Witt '82, Lori '85 Huber and Scott '84 Huber
4. Current student, Bayleigh Williams, shares a poem to open the program.
5. Jenn '13 and Matthew Murphy, Kat Seufert '11 and guest
6. Tyler '02 and Laura '04 Barr



CLASS NOTES



'10 MYERS



'11 (VOGT) CASE



'14 CRISS PETTY

'78 PAM (MITCHELL) ROUSSELO retired after a blessed 44 years (43 teaching) at Holy Trinity Catholic School in Lenexa, Kansas.

'79 CARYL GOODYEAR, PH.D., RN, NEA-BC, CCRN-K, FAAN was elected as President to Board of Directors for the Missouri Nurses Association. Caryl also began a new role at St. Luke's Health System as Director of Nursing Research.

'82 NANCY (PICKERING) MOSBURG published a book of poetry titled, *Twist of Lime*.

'86 JACKIE (MORITZ) BEUCHER who serves as treasurer for the Trust Fund of the Astronomical League was named to the Endowment Trust Board for the Association of Lunar & Planetary Observers.

'04 BRIAN GILMORE retired in March 2022 from Bristol Myers Squibb after a 25-year career in the pharmaceuticals industry.

'08 STEPHANIE MULLINS earned a Master of Science in Nursing in Advanced Public Health Nursing and Certificate in Public Health Practice from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan in December 2021.

'10, '13 JENNIFER LINDSEY recently accepted the position of HR Generalist and Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Lead with EPR Properties.

'10 DANNY MYERS and wife Sarah welcomed their first child, Luke Daniel on Jan. 18, 2022. Photo top



In Memoriam

'11 **EMMALYN (VOGT) CASE** and husband Mike welcomed their third child, a daughter, Quinn Marie on Dec. 5, 2021. Photo p. 14, bottom left

'14 **SHAWNALEE CRISS PETTY** and husband Taylor welcomed their first child, Emerson Lee on Sept. 8, 2021. Emerson weighed six pounds seven ounces and was 20 inches long. Photo p. 14, bottom right

'18 **LAUREN LARSON** joined the Avila University admissions team as a Graduate Admission Representative.

'18 **INDRA MURSID** recently became a Counselor at Johnson County Community College.

Stay Connected

We want to hear from you!

Job promotion, new baby, recent travels or new home? Let us know so we can share your good news! Email your news to alumni@avila.edu or complete the

What's New With You form at Avila.edu/Alumni.



Alumni Association

'47 **MARIA (LASALA) MUELLER** of Kansas City, Missouri passed away on January 13, 2022. Mueller earned her bachelor's in biology from the College of St. Teresa.

'53 **MARY KAY (PURCELL) VANDEN BOOM** of Kansas City, Missouri passed away on February 9, 2022. Vanden Boom attended the College of St. Teresa.

'60 **SR. ANN L. STRIZEK** of Blue Springs, Missouri passed away on January 12, 2022. Sr. Strizek received her bachelor's in medical record administration.

'68 **KAREN (STEINMETZ) GOELLNER** of Blue Springs, Missouri passed away on November 23, 2021. Goellner earned her bachelor's in music from Avila College.

'74 **ALEXANDER DELECARIS** of Lee's Summit, Missouri passed away on January 30, 2022. Delecaris earned his bachelor's in marketing from Avila College.

'82 **GENEVIEVE CLEARY** of Kansas City, Missouri passed away on September 1, 2021. Cleary earned her bachelor's in nursing from Avila College.

'84 **PATRICIA HIGHLAND** of Overland Park, Kansas passed away on January 25, 2022. Highland earned her bachelor's in communication from Avila College.

'89 **CRYSTAL (TRUMBO) PARRES** of Jacksonville Beach, Florida passed away on November 16, 2021. Parres earned her bachelor's in marketing from Avila College.

'94 **TERESA (VOSS) SULLIVAN** of Kansas City, Missouri passed away on December 28, 2021. Sullivan earned her bachelor's in psychology from Avila College.

'96 **SR. CAROLYN I. ROHDE** of Atchison, Kansas passed away on January 3, 2022. Sr. Rohde earned her bachelor's in nursing from Avila College.

'18 **MICHAEL MANSFIELD** of Kansas City, Missouri passed away on January 31, 2022. Mansfield earned his bachelor's in business administration and was working on his MBA at Avila University.

'20 **HENRY MORPHEW** of Olathe, Kansas passed away on December 17, 2021. Morpew earned his bachelor's in management from Avila University.

To make a gift in memory of a friend or loved one, please visit Avila.edu/give or call 816.501.3602.

Avila University Mourns Loss of Baseball Coach Daryl Cronk



Avila University lost a leader, mentor, friend, head baseball coach, and assistant athletic director in Daryl Cronk as he passed away on December 26, 2021. He was 46 years old.

“That morning was hard,” said Avila University Director of Athletics Shawn Summe. “Daryl was a great and genuine man. His ability to develop relationships with his players, coaches and those he met is a lost art today.”

A former All-American pitcher at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas, Cronk was one of the most invested and longest-tenured members of the Avila Athletics community, completing his tenth season as the head coach of the Eagle baseball team in May. He amassed more than 250 career wins in a tenure that included six conference tournament appearances and three NAIA tournament appearances since he became Avila’s head coach ahead of the 2012 campaign.

“There were conference championships and national tournament appearances but what was most important was all the lasting relationships he built,” said Summe. “Daryl created a culture of family within the Avila baseball program and that’s the most important thing a coach can do.”

Cronk passed away at University Hospital in Columbia, Missouri, surrounded by his friends and family. 🕊️



Top, left to right: Jason Paul, assistant baseball coach with Daryl Cronk†, head baseball coach; Blake, Brett and Bailee with their dad; Coach Cronk holding his nephew, Amari.

Trailblazer Mary Jo Bowman '58

Leaves scholarship legacy for business students



On February 25, 2022, Avila and the world lost a great friend. Mary Jo Bowman '58 was a trailblazer for women in business and a proud Avila alumna.

Mary Jo was one of four women who graduated in 1958 with a degree in business from the College of St. Teresa (now Avila University). She went on to forge a career in the historically male-dominated field of trade association administration. Through the years, Mary Jo maintained her close circle of Avila friends and was a welcome presence at Avila events.

Mary Jo's life was greatly influenced by her parents and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, who gave her the strength and conviction to chart her course. In 2002, Mary Jo made a decision to honor her parents and the Sisters, and pave the way for future students to succeed. She established the Mary Jo and Joe E. and Mary Bowman Family Business Scholarship at Avila University, to be funded through her estate. This scholarship will assist full-time undergraduate students with financial needs pursuing business degrees.

For Mary Jo, the scholarship leaves a lasting legacy for herself and her parents at the school she loved. Thanks to her generosity and foresight, that legacy lives on through Avila students now and for generations to come. 🙏

The Avila Heritage Society was established in 1989 to recognize the remarkable contributions of Avila alumni and friends who have made provisions in their estate plans or lifetime planned gifts to support the ongoing and future needs of the University.

With your planned gift, you will become a member of the Heritage Society, joining other forward-thinking individuals and families committed to ensuring academic excellence for future generations of Avila students. Individuals, corporations, and foundations that have funded named endowed scholarships are also included as members of the Avila Heritage Society Roll of Honor.



Here are some ways you can ensure your legacy at Avila University:

- **Include Avila in your will or living trust** – making a gift this way doesn't affect your cash flow now and has an added benefit of an estate tax deduction in the future.
- **Life insurance gifts** – naming Avila as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy enables you to make a significant gift at a relatively small cost.
- **IRA Charitable Rollover** – if you are age 70 and older, you can reduce your taxable income by making a gift directly from your IRA.

Please contact **Amy Drouin, senior director of development and planned giving**, at **816.501.3727** or **amy.drouin@avila.edu** to begin creating your legacy today. If you have already included Avila University in your estate plans, thank you! Please let us know of your estate gift so we can recognize your legacy and induct you in Avila's Heritage Society.



Be Inspired.

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Let the *Good Times*
SOAR!

HOMECOMING WEEKEND:

SEPTEMBER 29 - OCTOBER 2

SAVE THE DATE and plan on returning to campus for a fun-filled Homecoming Weekend! Activities include the Heritage Day Luncheon, Athletics Hall of Fame induction, Dinner Theatre, Alumni Award presentations, class reunions, theatre performances and athletics games. All alumni and friends are welcome! Visit **Avila.edu/Homecoming** to learn more.



Alumni Association